

Message Text

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S E C R E T SANAA 1839

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE

SUBJECT: SAUDI MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YAR

REF: SANAA 1756

SUMMARY: ABU SHAWARIB SAID YARG PROMISED SUBSTANTIAL AND SPECIFIC MILITARY AID BY SAG. HE STRESSED NEED FOR NEW EQUIPMENT. CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS SAID SOVIET ADVISERS WILL BE EASED OUT. JORDANIAN TEAM WILL ARRIVE AFTER RAMADAN.

1. I CALLED ON COMMAND COUNCIL DEPUTY CHAIRMAN LTC MUJAHID ABD SHAWARIB EVENING SEPT 3 TO LEARN WHAT PROGRESS HE HAD MADE ON SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE THAT HE AND COMMAND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN HAMDI HAD TOLD ME AUGUST 26 WOULD BE PRESENTED TO SAG DURING ABU SHAWARIB'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA (REFTEL). I NOTED PUBLIC REPORTS THAT HE HAD SEEN KING AND HAD VERY SUCCESSFUL VISIT.

2. ABU SHAWARIB SAID TRIP HAD BEEN "NOT BAD" ("LA BA'S"). HE HAD FOUND KING VERY SYMPATHETIC AND AWARE OF SOVIET ROLE IN CONTROLLING PDY AS PART OF PLAN TO DOMINATE SOUTHERN RED SEA AREA.

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3. I ASKED ABU SHAWARIB WHAT SPECIFIC RESPONSES HE HAD

RECEIVED TO HIS SPECIFIC REQUESTS TO SAG. HE RESPONDED THAT SAG HAD PROMISED HIM SOMEWHAT LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF EQUIPMENT CONTAINED IN 1973 "QABBANI PLAN." SAG HAD TOLD HIM BALANCE WOULD BE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN USG AND SAG DURING NOVEMBER MEETINGS OF JOINT SECURITY COMMISSION. SAG WOULD SEND WHATEVER ITEMS IT HAD IN STOCK FROM FIRST ONE-THIRD WITHIN MONTH OR TWO. SPECIFICALLY ABU SHAWARIB SAID HE EXPECTED 2-3 BATTALIONS OF TANKS, 2-3 BATTALIONS OF ARTILLERY, AAA, TRUCKS, AND VARIOUS OTHER ITEMS.

4. ABU SHAWARIB SAID HE HAD STRESSED TO SAG THAT ARMS SHOULD BE NEW OR NEARLY NEW. HE RELATED TO ME STORIES EARLIER REPORTED OF OLD BRITISH SEVENTEEN POUNDERS ARTILLERY PIECES ALL INOPERATIVE AND T-34 TANKS WHICH BROKE DOWN REPEATEDLY. HE ALLEGED GOE HAD BACKED OUT OF ITS PREVIOUS COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE YAR WITH T-54'S AS PARTED OF SAG-FINANCED ASSISTANCE, SAYING THAT EGYPT HAD NONE TO SPARE.

5. ABU SHAWARIB EXPOUNDED AT SOME LENGTH ON MILITARY SITUATION IN BAB AL-MANDEB, PROVIDING SOME RATHER UNRELIABLE-SOUNDING ESTIMATES OF PDRY MILITARY STRENGTH. MORE INTERESTINGLY HE TOLD ME THAT SOVIET CHARGE HAD ADMITTED TO HIM PRESENCE OF SAM-3,6 AND 7 MISSILES IN PDRY BUT ALLEGED THEY THERE ONLY TO DEFEND AGAINST SAUDI THREAT. ABU SHAWARIB SAID THAT AS RESULT PDRY'S POSSESSION MODERN SOVIET WEAPONS, YARG FEARED TWO-Pincer PDRY OPERATION TO SEIZE SOUTHERN TIHAMA THROUGH

BAB AL-MANDEB AND TAIZ THROUGH RAHIDA AND KIRSH, FOLLOWING WHICH PDRY WOULD EMULATE TURKEY IN CYPRUS BY SITTING ON THE TERRITORY WHILE CALLING FOR PEACE. ABU SHAWARIB COMPLAINED THAT YAR ARMED FORCES HAD FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES SEVERED TIES WITH SOVIET ADVISORS, BUT STILL HAD NOT RECEIVED SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM ITS FRIENDS.

6. I NOTED IN RESPONSE THAT HIS TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA HAD BROUGHT SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM SAG WHICH CLEARLY RECOGNIZED ITS SECURITY INTEREST IN YEMEN. WE TOO HAD EXPRESSED OUR INTEREST IN SAG SECURITY DATING BACK TO THEN SECRETARY ROGERS VISIT IN 1972. IN VIEW OF AMPLE FUNDS POSSESSED BY SAG, WE LOOKED TO IT TO PROVIDE FUNDING WHILE WE
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COOPERATED IN MAKING AVAILABLE EXPERTISE TO SAG AS WELL AS BEING SOURCE FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT ITSELF. IT APPEARED THAT BOTH USG AND SAG WERE LOOKING TO NOVEMBER MEETING AS FORUM TO MAKE PROGRESS COOPERTIVELY ON YAR'S ARMS NEEDS.

7. ON WAY OUT I STOPPED FOR CHAT WITH CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS LTC AHMAD AL-MUTAWWAKIL (COUSIN OF MININT LTC YAHYA AL-MUTAWAKKIL). HE TOLD ME THAT RELATIONS WITH

130 SOVIET EXPERTS WERE AT ALL TIME LOW. THERE WAS ALMOST
NO CONTACT (FAVORITE YEMENI PLAY WE UNDERSTAND IS TOO
COOPT THEIR YEMENI INTERPRETERS). ARRIVAL OF 85 MAN
JORDANIAN TEAM HAD BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL END OF RAMADAN AT
GOJ REQUEST. HE SAID DECISION HAD NOW BEEN MADE TO
ELIMINATE SOVIET ADVISORS, BUT THIS WOULD BE DONE BY SLOW
EASY STEPS IN ORDER NOT TO PROVOKE CONFRONTATION.
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